



# TARAgam YATRA 2012

inspiring sustainability

## Sustainable Development in South Asia

*Women Driving Change*

## Proceedings

22-25 November 2012

Development Alternatives World Headquarters  
New Delhi

and

TARAgam Orchha, Madhya Pradesh





# Proceedings





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## Acknowledgment

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We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed to making TARAGram Yatra 2012 – the Yatris, the community members of Bundelkhand, the delegates and speakers representing local communities, civil society, thought leaders, policy makers, from South Asian countries, international organisations and staff of Development Alternatives and SWAN network.

This event was possible due to active support of the partners SWAN, UNEP and Development Alternatives. Our sincere thanks go to all representatives and members to share their experience, expertise and patience in bearing with us through the trials and tribulations, right through to the end of the event.

We are grateful to the financial sponsors of the entire event.

One of the highlights of the event was the TARAGram Mela. This was made possible with the support of Civil Society organisations, local government and district authorities, local banks and NABARD, local companies and the community of Bundelkhand. The TARAGram Mela 2012 provided an opportunity to showcase development approaches, demonstrate technology and solutions and showcase products, and use of community radio and ICTs for eliciting community support for driving the change.

The team at Orchha, the event management team, the logistics team, and colleagues at the Bundelkhand Resource Centre and Delhi offices did an excellent job of organising the event successfully. Excellent video and photographic documentation was provided by Sanjay who is himself trained as a development documentation person. Radio Bundelkhand got a good opportunity to record the views and experiences of the experts from South Asia for the benefit of the people of Bundelkhand region. Jayalakshmi Chittoor provided South Asia policy perspectives, and supported in the design and development of the technical sessions of Yatra, and in preparing the proceedings. Our thanks go to each and every team members for providing crucial support to make this Yatra successful.

TARAGram Yatra 2012 has been able to sensitise and motivate the stakeholders to put women at the centre-stage of the development agenda. The SWAN Network has, we are sure, grown stronger, built newer alliances and pledged to take forward the dialogue and deliberations to more cooperative and collaborative action. We hope that this inclusive South Asian agenda of Women Driving Change becomes a central and continuing theme for the coming months amongst all stakeholders.

The Development Alternatives Group.



## Preface

### **Gender Perspective in South Asia**

Convinced about the centrality of women's agency, voice, participation and leadership in the achievement of social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, the TARAGram Yatra 2012 will strive to take forward the deliberations and knowledge exchange activities aimed at collective planning, networking and designing action programmes to implement a collective vision of sustainable and equitable development in South Asia.

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) that brings together 8 individual and thematic networks covers the following issues: (i) arts and literature; (ii) women in peacemaking, (iii) health, nutrition and food security, (iv) education, (v) crafts and textiles, (vi) livelihood development and entrepreneurship, (vii) environment and (viii) women in media is the key partner along with UNEP and APFED for supporting a new process of collective action plan development.

The Yatra will deliberate on concrete concept notes and ideas for actions that emerged from the Kathmandu workshop held in July 2012. It will focus on capacity building for scalability of actions and provide a knowledge exchange platform to ask the fundamental question, "What do we mean by sustainable economies when women drive it?" It will be an opportunity for celebrating contributions women have been making – in their own lives, in families, and in societies at local level. This will pave the way for policy agenda and scalable solutions. It will look at how women and communities come together.

For this to happen, capacity building and leadership potential has to be built at the grassroots level. The Yatra will strive to come up with a design of making a 100,000 women as leaders of change. The model being contemplated is collective programme design, sharing of expertise across countries, fast-tracking the learning through knowledge exchange mechanisms and through systematic 'Train the Trainer' model for thematic capacity building. All this is designed to scale up capacity of the partners and reach the targeted number of women who can drive change. It is aimed at building sustainable economies and, overall, healthier and happier society.

This strategy will help the under-developed countries and regions to fast track progress and push out of poverty. The three running themes under which deliberations will take place include: basic needs empowerment; entrepreneurship and livelihoods including financial exclusion and leadership and political participation.

### **TARAGram Yatra 2012**

TARAGram Yatra is an annual event organised by Development Alternatives and its partners to deliberate upon issues relating to sustainability. The Yatra is designed to exchange cutting edge ideas on how to realize a sustainable future. The event provides for follow up on policies and actions at the local, national, regional and global levels.

### **Focus 2012**

This year's focus is "Sustainable Development in South Asia - Women Driving Change". Taking forward the dialogue initiated at Kathmandu by South Asia Women's Network (SWAN), the theme pegs women in leadership roles, driving the change in all aspects of development, and placing their role at the centre-stage in the sustainable development discourse and agenda.

Sustainable human development efforts by various stakeholders in South Asian region can only be strengthened by greater networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing, bringing a greater momentum to efforts in improving the lives of people in South Asia. For the purposes of this dialogue, the region includes the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.



## Executive Summary

There is growing international concern about the social and environmental costs of the current development pathway adopted by most nations. Climate change, species loss and ecosystem destruction at scale have led to social ramifications such as extensive migration, climate refugees, social strife and domestic and international conflict.

The international community has concluded that sustainable development practices are required in order to combat these risks to human security. This calls for a move to a new path of development. This new path, which will take us to a sustainable future, and provide well being and fulfillment for all must focus much more on eliminating poverty and regenerating the environment. This means creating green jobs and sustainable livelihoods, strengthening social capital, empowering citizens, reducing our carbon footprint, reversing the loss of biodiversity and reviving the health of our ecosystems and societies.

The South Asian sub-region, endowed with a rich natural resource base, world's oldest civilizations with tremendous depth of social and spiritual philosophies should ideally position itself as a world leader in the path to sustainable development. It is however, one of the poorest and most vulnerable regions in the world and most of its constituent nations at the lower half of the world's human development index. Amongst the many concerns that plague the sub-region is the marginalization of large numbers of its communities especially women.

Studies on gender and development issues in the sub-region have revealed that one of the barriers to sustainable development here has been the underdevelopment of its women. It has been proven that wherever women have had equitable access to education, economic opportunities and social support systems, families and societies have benefitted. Empowering Women in South Asia through education, capacity building, enterprise creation and leadership development supported by an enabling policy environment for mainstreaming their concerns has become essential.

The South Asia Women's Network in its Annual Conference held at Kathmandu between 16 -18 July 2012 [dedicated to the theme of "Women of South Asia and Sustainable Development" ] decided to strive for "sustainable future for all" by taking a critical call for collective civil society action with women at the centre of leadership. SWAN is committed to work in eight sectors viz. Arts and Literature, Women in Peacemaking, Health, Nutrition and Food Security, Education, Crafts and Textiles, Livelihood Development and Entrepreneurship, Environment and Women in Media.

**TARAGram Yatra** is an annual event in India led by the Development Alternatives Group in partnership with international thinking – learning organisations, designed to deliberate on germane issues of development with the mission of inspiring sustainability in policy and practice. It brings together practitioners and policy makers from India and other parts of the World to share current thinking on and define direction of action to alleviate poverty, regenerate the environment and tackle social deprivation especially in the developing world. With a mix of dialogue and field visits, the Yatra provides a platform for exchanging cutting edge ideas on how to realize a sustainable future. The event provides leads for follow-up on policies and action at the global, national and local levels.

In the past two years, the TARAGram Yatra has contributed to form opinions around the concept of 'Green Economy' debated intensely at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at Rio de Janeiro and helped build ideas for action for the Asia Pacific region presented to the International Poverty and Environment program.

This year, **TARAGram Yatra 2012**, from the 22 to 25 November focused on empowering women to lead the world on the path for Sustainable Development. Entitled, "**Sustainable Development in South Asia – Women Driving Change**", the Yatra will celebrate contributions that women make to the economic, social, and political lives of their countries, communities, and families. It debated on the practical solutions for sustainable livelihoods and green enterprises and the policies required to develop capacities and skills across women in South Asia empowering them as key actors and leaders in a green economy.



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## Sustainable Development in South Asia

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## Section I

22-25 November 2012

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# 1. South Asia Sustainable Development Agenda - Women Driving Change

## Empowered Women: Key Drivers of Sustainable Development

When women are empowered, they drive changes that balance the economic and ecological goals. Most women in South Asia are engaged in supporting families under extremely trying circumstances, and accessing natural resources for sustenance. The experiences shared at the Yatra outlined the role of empowered women, emerging as leaders driving change, to take on an inclusive growth strategy, focusing attention on poverty reduction, application of new skills combined with traditional knowledge, practices and culture, to steer a path of inclusive sustainable development in South Asia.

Providing the directions on addressing women's issues from the rights perspective, and to keep in mind that most poor are women and most women are poor, TARAGram Yatra recommended that national development strategies must focus on girls and women to achieve sustainable development goals.

There are three core aspects of fulfilling basic needs, ensuring economic empowerment and livelihoods, and participation in decision making roles while talking about women driving change. The policy gaps need to be addressed to ensure that women can fulfill their aspiration to participate in larger economic goals and achieving access to skills and finances to promote entrepreneurship. It is a critical step to pave the pathway for larger role in democratic and political processes. Fulfilling basic needs is prerequisite to women's engagement and decision making in leadership positions at various levels of institutions.

For the above to happen, women's issues need to be addressed engaging communities and women in driving this change. This includes addressing violence against women, portrayal of women in media, enabling participation in decision

making and hence contributing to sustainable green economies.

In order to fulfill this role, women and girls must find opportunities to be educated, have rights and entitlements to land, water, and energy resources, and work within the framework of equity and justice, drawing on the gains made internationally, regionally and nationally, through various instruments like UN agreements and strategies, CEDAW, regional networks for advocacy, and national civil society engagement. At the local level, women's organisations and collectives like Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are important institutional mechanisms for policy makers to engage with to ensure that women are at the centre-stage of this change.

Innovative use of ICTs like TARA Akshar which has made literate over 60,000 people gives hope for fast tracking learning and literacy. There is also need to explore skill development programmes that can create jobs, in off-farm activities like education and health; environment and research; employment income generating activities. The above, focused on empowerment, helps to bring women in the centre-stage of leadership and decision making. Synergies and partnerships can lead to scalable impacts. Technologies that are appropriate and sustainable can lead to large scale transformation of people's lives.

## Global Perspective on Women's Role in Driving Change

Lise Grande, UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP, India, in her inaugural address referred to Ban Ki Moon, former UN Secretary General's statement that signified the importance of women, "There is no greater importance than changing the status of women". The Human Development Report of the Asia Pacific region indicates that there is need to focus attention on women, as many are still denied opportunities



given to men, which is unjust and unacceptable.

While there are affirmative policies where there is increase in women's education, political participation, the fact remains that 50% of all women are poor, there is increasing feminisation of agriculture and the feminisation of the informal economy. They have little or no rights or entitlements, and if rights are there, access and linkages are poor which gives them little or no access to finance. Women face discrimination and violence – before birth, through the life cycle and death. When women contribute to the formal sector, there is a definite increase in GDP. Where women's engagement increased 20% in formal sector, there was a 4% increase in GDP.

IKEA Foundation and UNDP have been working closely to promote women in enterprises, which leads to increase in incomes by up to 40% and further leads to political and social empowerment. Since the adoption of MDGs in 2000, a momentum and focused attention on various development indicators have been seen in South Asia.

Post MDG deliberations globally will also be a largely consultative process with over 26 advisors working to draft the future agenda. There will be national meetings, 11 thematic global conferences and virtual platforms. UNDP representative invited the SWAN network and TARAGram Yatris to play an active role in building partnerships for women's empowerment and contribute to defining the future agenda and priorities for South Asia.



## 2. Collaborating for Scalable Action and the Dialogue Process

### **SWAN Network: Prioritizing Women's Role as Change Leaders in South Asia**

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) in its 4<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held in Nepal in July 2012 talked about SWAN in enhancing people-to-people interactions and sharing experiences in 8 sectoral SWANs (thematic sub-networks). The 5<sup>th</sup> SWAN meeting is expected to take place in Colombo (Sri Lanka) in 2013. Beyond 2015 the MDGs would be redefined as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Emphasising that Equality, Rights and Empowerment of women should be fundamental to Sustainable Development Goals, the deliberations should focus on women driving this change. Global policies must be for women and be drafted by women. There is a need to take a bottom up approach.

While there is an increasing number of women at entry level (in IT) the social disparity is very high. Sustainable development processes must recognise that inclusive development must focus on areas like crafts, textiles, medicines, water harvesting, etc. taking into account the immense wealth of knowledge in traditional systems and practices. Exchanges on these are critical to draw ideas and lessons for future strategies.

There is need to outline a rights based transformation agenda which focuses on human resources pool and indigenous people, cultural and linguistic diversity of the South Asian Region, while recognising the need for enhancement of skills, design and marketing/financial linkages for a sustainable future.

In July 2012, the Kathmandu Declaration outlined the importance of advocacy for policy making; leadership development and capacity building as three primary approaches to address the above themes. SWAN will conduct a special workshop on SDGs with high levels of commitment and process to enable creation of thematic networks, dialogues, debates, leading to

prioritisation of issues of importance for the South Asian women.

### **Role of Civil Society in Defining a Bottom-up Approach to Poverty Reduction**

Drawing lessons from the Indian Cooperative Network for Women where civil society had guided the advancement of women in national sustainable development action plans, attention was drawn to the 1991 SAARC region's Poverty Commission Report – which was designed in harmonising growth and poverty reduction. The contribution of the poor and women has still not been adequately recognised. The accumulation process at the grassroots level that has contributed to economic growth has also not been recorded. Growing number of people are being pushed into poverty and will definitely impact the region's governance. Further, increasing privatisation is certain to lead to negative impacts on lives of the poor.

Most of the countries of the South Asian region is agrarian and faces the impact of food inflation and widening rural-urban disparity. It is likely to lead to more social unrest. Such impacts affect the achievement of MDG goals relating to poverty and hunger.

Several of these issues are inter-related. For example, the increased incidences of crop failures; youth unemployment; and impact of climate change. Other social issues like the entrenched patriarchy in society and its institutions affect planning and women the most. Thus, identifying women's needs is clearer than ever – gender specific paradigm analysis is needed.

Identifying some of the key gender perspective areas that required attention are: considerable institutional capacities need to be built; attitude shift is needed; focus on literacy, economic and social security. 'Bottlenecks that stop women



from mobility' from small to large must be identified. Greater interaction between governments and civil society is needed, which must be through the creation of a new engendered paradigm which allows social mobilisation of poor women – into new economic groups.

Violence against women continues to be a detracting force to achieve MDGs. The billion rising campaign is a way to bring large numbers of women to advocate for violence against women and need to focus on sustainable development issues. Women have to take the centre stage in the development discourse at the grassroots action level, and regional policy and action level and at international levels.

### **TARAGram Dialogue Process**

TARAGram Yatra's four day deliberation process provided an intense interactive opportunity for participants to deliberate on a variety of issues that represents the diversity of the region and the putting women on the driver's seat.

To set the agenda and priorities, participants would have an opportunity to hear from two panels of experts. Women who have led sustainable development initiatives in South Asia set the context of the intense deliberations in session one. In the second session, two panel discussions and a short film on Women of Change screened would provide the opportunity to peg important aspects of the dialogue. The first panel discussion on grassroots action and opportunities for women empowerment and the second panel discussion on influencing policy for women's empowerment would provide threads for helping to set the future course of action after the TARAGram Yatra.

Important aspect of the Yatra is an opportunity to visit various sustainable development initiatives and activities that have changed the lives of the people of Bundelkhand region, a semi-arid zone in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India. Lessons for replication and community engagement, and challenges faced can also be understood.

A TARAGram Mela showcasing the work of communities in the region in adopting appropriate technologies, conserving their tradition and culture and showcasing their products through an informal market will be part of the learning process and strives to guide the recommendations for action.

Outlining the framework of the deliberations over the next days of the Yatra, the clustering of issues was made to prioritise them as follow:

1. Access to basic needs and natural resources
2. Entrepreneurship Development and Livelihoods Enhancement
3. Equal participation in Governance

'Women Driving Change' would mean nurturing leadership, building capacities and influencing policies, and creating opportunities to document and share knowledge through dialogues and regional cooperative activities including workshops, training, and learning visits.

Sharing good practices and success stories help to design scalable action. Research and knowledge documentation processes need to be set in motion to revisit the work already done by various stakeholders. Participants will also explore possibility of scalable and noticeable actions through coordinated partnerships actions in the coming years.



## 3. TARAGram Yatra 2012 Objectives, Participants, Process and Discussion Format

### Agenda Setting - Networking, Knowledge Sharing

TARAGram Yatra 2012 is aimed to enable participants to develop action plans and inspire sustainability through a process of experience sharing, allowing for ideas to flow freely, document challenges and focus on collating conceptual ideas into thematic discussions and crystallising priorities.

The process is designed to be embellished by learning from grassroots practitioners and informing policies. Practice informs policy, and when deliberations happen in partnership, ideas get converted to coordinated work plans, and this creates a visible impact.

The annual Yatra is increasingly becoming a platform where exchanging views and experiences lead to plans of cooperative action. The knowledge exchange that emerges out of these deliberations will give a better perception of green economies in South Asia. The discussions also help to identify areas where building capacities for action is required. The linkages with the poverty environment programme are critical to define the rationale for the 2012 Yatra.

The dialogue will examine what we mean by sustainable economies when women drive it. The Yatris will be celebrating the contributions women have been making – women who have been able to make changes: in their own lives, families, societies, at the local level, and all the way up to the top. The dialogue will also examine what the potential is for further changes. It will look at how women and communities sort of come together and contribute to building sustainable economies and thus an overall healthier and happier society.

The TARAGram Yatra also deliberates on the next steps: Where we want to go from here?

### TARAGram 2012 Vision

The vision is to create a critical mass of 100,000 women who will make a difference in this region, who are skilled and capable, and will drive the path to sustainable development.

### TARAGram 2012 Objectives

1. Provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge, experiences and challenges faced by women in South Asia.
2. Orient policy makers and practitioners with emerging concepts and models for sustainable development for women in South Asia.
3. Identify policy imperatives and support systems required to scale up such women led grassroots initiatives in the region that have shown significant social and environmental value addition while strengthening economic assets of communities.
4. Draft a four-year process of discussions among policy makers and practitioners interspersed with capacity building and skill development of women leaders for fostering peace, sustainability and equity across South Asian region.

### TARAGram Yatra Participants

Participants from various civil society organisations, experts and decision makers from nine countries of the South Asian region representing various organisations took part in the Yatra. Other experts who joined were drawn from UNEP's APFED programme. With varied experience and expertise, the Yatris had both formal and informal opportunities to showcase their work, collaborate and explore building new partnerships and alliances.

The Yatris interfaced with communities from various villages in the Bundelkhand



region, including grassroots women. They provided field-level insights that assisted in informing the deliberations. The interactions of the participants with the community members, artisans, grassroots technologists, and self-help group members also brought to the spotlight the importance of leadership at the local level to advocate for changes needed to adopt sustainable development strategies.

Field visits to understand the challenges and opportunities for practically scaling up action, driven by a decentralised and technology driven solution, provided an opportunity to plan for more South Asian level exchanges and knowledge transfer possibilities.



## 4. Women Driving Change - Perspectives and Priorities: Significant thought breakthroughs at the Yatra

The Yatra is a partnership between Development Alternatives Group and South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) supported by the United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP APFED Showcase programme. The deliberations over four days proposes to help design a roadmap of action on capacity development and leadership training of women in South Asia connecting them to economic opportunities and supporting policy development in this arena.

The debate on the practical solutions for sustainable livelihoods and green enterprises and the policies required to develop capacities and skills across women in South Asia empowering them as key actors and leaders in a green economy was the key thrust of the deliberations.

The four-day event showcased the achievements of grassroots actions in community empowerment led by women. Discussions focussed on role and potential of women led interventions to nurture and revive the health of our ecosystems, enhance securities of food, water, energy and livelihoods and build greener economies, healthier and happier societies. Strategies such as education, skill building, enterprise development, institutional supports and leadership development for enabling women in the region to drive the process of sustainable development will be discussed.

Moderated discussions were designed to be interspersed with grassroots experience sharing opportunities through visits to field projects and meetings with women's groups in the rural areas of Bundelkhand and experience sharing amongst initiatives drawn from the South Asian region. Experience sharing of grass roots action will be juxtaposed with interventions on policy support and capacity enhancement programmes required for scaling up good practices and supporting large scale women's empowerment in the region.

Participants had an opportunity to get expert advise on designing collaborative capacity building programmes and for outlining strategies for knowledge sharing, action-research and policy advocacy processes. Sharing expertise among the participants and invited experts, the participants gained knowledge about processes used in successful projects in other countries.

18 concept ideas that were proposed before the beginning of the workshop were shared. Challenges and potential for scaling up action and debating the next steps proceeded during the Yatra.



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### Section II

22-25 November 2012

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# 1. Creating Conducive Conditions for Capacity Building

## Peace and Security

### Raising Collective Voices on Violence Against Women (VAW)

Rainbow coalition of movements and alliances is organised to bring grassroots voices to influence policy. *A billion rising and dancing* is a global campaign to raise political consciousness, on 'Violence against women and girls'. The one billion women are not homogenous, they are diverse, and an understanding of who our one billion women are is very important.

The key issue is that we haven't achieved MDGs and missing targets in the millennium development goals. This is primarily due to violence against women – substantively and structurally. Unless these issues are addressed, VAW will never allow us to meet any other targets. We need to set in motion processes, networks and campaigns to articulate these issues as people's voices.

The huge implementation deficit on back to basics is because historical perspectives have been lost, and understanding of concepts and frameworks has got diluted very dramatically – it cannot be based on pre historical perspectives and substance. Diluted political will is a serious problem that confronts the women's movement.

We all need partnerships, and empowered relationships based on principles of equality, space, centrality and respect. The masses are there but are still invisible stakeholders to the change processes. The power relations have changed substantively between men and women, and other identities. We really need to look at branding and logos versus people and peoples' initiatives, as is done in Jagori and Sangat.

When addressing issues around women driving change we should use CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of All form of Discrimination Against Women). It is a very important tool because it talks about women's human rights principles. These issues have to be pegged as indivisible

and inalienable principles. The approach is to take inter-sectional approach to address women's issues.

Work to address the issue of access to resources and services must include ownership and control over the resources. We must also get respect that we deserve.

Women's struggles have to deal with cultural resistance, which includes patriarchy, fundamentalism, handling power relations, etc. We need to change the narrative. We must take an ecological approach to change in a women's life. It cannot be a silo-ed approach, addressing only single issues like economic empowerment or institutional issues (family, community, etc.), as these are very inter-connected.

### Ensuring that Large-Scale Migrant Workers are Protected

Asia Foundation has been addressing the issue of conflicts and marginalisation and loss of livelihoods that leads to trafficking and migration through policy advocacy. Large scale migration of women in particular (and people in general) as a result of conflict, resulting in mass exodus. Due to loss of livelihoods and support, women are forced to migrate. Women's empowerment is possible when we can address their rights (labour rights) to be protected by both the sending and receiving countries. Policies must address these sensitive issues.

The strategy is to find specific solutions to specific issues and not issue generic solutions. In Philippines, for example, the Government invested in people, skilled them and negotiates on their behalf to get rights. This rights based approach has resulted in trafficking form Philippines to be drastically reduced. The lesson that we learn is that the onus of legal framework and policies vests always with the "sending" countries and not the "receiving" countries (de facto).

The rights-based approach must look at skills and livelihoods, draw inter-linkages



and to position things in the economic, social and political context bearing in mind the cultural dimensions of the regions.

Experts stated that the concept of poverty reduction must change to wealth creation. Thus, while redefining the client patron relationship in the poverty reduction programmes, the individual to be at the centre of wealth creation. This idea needs to be mainstreamed.

### **Women's Rights are Human Rights**

Women and girls are driving change and women's rights are being expressed within the framework of Human Rights. The rights approach look at discrimination and examines both state actor and non-state actors like family, community, religious leaders, corporate sector, etc. Such an integrated approach takes looking at Human Rights as the starting point.

It is important to recognise women activists as Human Rights defenders and activists, to get better protection. Capacity building activities on two areas are very critical, Internet Security and life skills on day to day work with state actors like Police, Judiciary, etc. (at local, national, and international levels).

When international aid is tied to conditions such as protection of human rights as a pre-condition, then many donors' guidelines can impact status of women in developing countries.

Claiming rights and claiming justice – a coalition for women's human rights defenders welcomes more women's groups to join the network, and strengthen the advocacy potential of NGOs in South Asia.

As in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, while it is 20 years since the first women leader came to power, it has not improved the status of women much. Though the legal framework has improved in all these countries, there is continuing implementation deficit. Bad governance – lies at the core of all the ills in the society. This is the core of the problem of the South Asian region in general. There is lack of accountability at every level and people's rights are constantly violated.

The role of women in several institutional structures, i.e. in family, village, society and state as decision makers have to be recognised.

The South Asian society in general does not value women's work and contribution. It is not enough to just monetise women's contribution but important to make it count. There is a need to focus on status of women.

Nobody is willing to annoy or alienate the more powerful groups of people. This raises the questions: "Does election bring us democracy, bring equality, space for voice, especially of women?" "Where is the true representation of people?"

To respond to these questions it is important to mobilise create a critical mass of women in leadership positions. Collective voice will make policy makers listen. This is what is being attempted by SWAN, to bring together the voices of women, in different positions and representing different strata, and countries, in one voice.

### **Policy as a Key Enabler**

In 2000, 189 nations made a promise to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations by 2015. This pledge turned into the Millennium Development Goals. Several challenges faced in South Asian countries have made progress slow. All South Asian countries have affirmed their pledge to the MDGs is making significant efforts to achieve their National Development Goals, which directly relate to achieving the MDGs. The achievement of the MDGs, however or the eradication of extreme poverty would be incomplete without addressing questions of gender equitable development.

Globally, the Beijing Platform for Action and Committee for Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provide the framework with which a Gender Specific Development Agenda can be pursued. While specific Gender Laws and Acts have been enacted in several countries in South Asia, the key challenge in ensuring equity and justice stems from the prevailing religious, and socio-cultural beliefs and practices, a milieu which create



the barriers for enforcing the justice enshrined in National Constitutional rights and laws with regard to the role of women.

As defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), mainstreaming gender perspectives is the “process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

The issues of caste, class, religious and economic situation including abject poverty, besides the problem of internal and external conflicts (lack of peace/ insurgency/ war, etc.) makes the South Asian region a sensitive one wherein policies and strategies will need to be evolved bearing in mind the difficulties that communities face on a daily basis. Keeping with this, and with the impending MDG deadline just three years away, the South Asia Women’s Network (SWAN), in its Kathmandu Declaration has enunciated the importance of Education, Leadership, Political Participation, Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods Enhancement, Food security, Health, Basic needs enhancements, and Environment and Sustainable Development.

The key common challenges faced by South Asian countries are: rampant corruption; threat of military dictatorship making elected governments very fragile and vulnerable; and religious fundamentalism. Under this canvas, the development agenda needs to be addressed. The Role of State and Civil Society actors are both critical to ensure that notable and measurable actions are seen and impacts felt on the ground.

An environment of peace and involvement of women in the reconstruction processes in nations that are recovered from

extended periods of strife is essential to create a conducive environment for women’s empowerment and political participation for good governance and achieving sustainable development goals.

Women play a critical role as preservers of cultural, traditional wisdom and bio-diversity and their role must be affirmed in policies relating to management of natural resources (forests, water, and medicinal plants), trade and investment policies and governance.

### **Nurturing Networks and Partnerships**

Why do we have to make an intervention in somebody’s life? ‘Empowering who and why’ is important to understand. While the realities confronted by the region are different for different people, it is critical to document the aspiration and dreams of people. They have to be able to expand the horizon and aspire for better opportunities, and go beyond what they are already exposed to. International and regional partnerships, alliances and networks enable communities to learn to expand their horizon and learn about newer aspects of quality of life and sustainable development strategies. At the core of it is poverty reduction, and needs to be a continuing theme to be addressed as we develop new sustainable development strategies.

New paradigms have to get defined, as people move away from being a member of a collective, to being a leader, a catalyst in social transformation process, leading the transition while improving lives not just for this generation, but also for the future. The solutions have to be long-term. For this, empowerment of women and men is critical. The need to move away from donor-driven, project mode of working and need to introspect deeply about strategies to cope with situations when external resources dry up was emphasised.

The central strategy for this is to celebrate a rainbow of innovations, and finding solutions from the grassroots, developing and building 100,000 women leaders to create a revolution. Such collective actions will ensure that policies don’t get made in international board rooms, but are as much decentralised as possible.



## 2. Key Enablers for Driving Change: Opportunities for Scalability

### **Access to Education is key to Women's Empowerment**

In order to ensure that girls and women have access to education, conditions have to be conducive. It is a pre-condition to women's empowerment. Across South Asia, with Right to Education and Compulsory Primary Education being implemented, there has been considerable progress. However, there are still several barriers to learning and access

to formal schooling, especially among adults.

Participants emphasised the importance of access to education as a fundamental prerequisite to achieve sustainable development. If women have to take leadership role, and have impact, there has to be mass scale teaching and learning opportunities. Information and communication technologies can play a very important role to achieve this.

### **NIRANTAR's Innovative approaches to girls' and women's education**

The South Asian region faces a number of challenges. There is no gender and education oriented network in India or South Asian region. The linkages of gender and education are not articulated and addressed – both in education or development sector. Lack of access to schooling and disparity in educational levels are not limited to lack of infrastructure or resources. Rising levels of education are not changing the gender relations and dynamics. Education of girls is a commitment of most of the countries and MDG goal on education underlines gender parity in Primary Education. Yet, the reality of dealing with the challenges is not simple.

Nirantar Trust has been working in this area for nearly 20 years and has offices in New Delhi, and in three districts of Uttar Pradesh. Empowering women through education is achieved by enabling access to information, promoting literacy and engendering education processes. It is done through direct field interventions, creating educational resources, research and advocacy, and training. Nirantar is actively involved with the women's movement and other democratic rights movements, thus brings concerns central to these movements into its educational work.

Besides building gender perspectives, Nirantar has undertaken text book study in 5 states, trained teachers, worked with the education system, including working with the curriculum development committees, and being part of text book writing for State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

Nirantar has felt the need to bring gender perspectives while approaching education for girls and women. Shifting the framework and developing a gender based approach to education means that focus must be made on women's empowerment. A specialized course so developed needs to be modular and subject to a lot of discussions and debate. Learning from field experiences, the engagement of girls and women's issues and making it centre-stage of policy making is an important innovative thrust of the work of Nirantar.

The Gender and Education framework has been well received not only by civil society but also by academics. The course is adaptable and replicable in other South Asian countries. There is need for have more experience sharing opportunities and stronger network to advocate this perspective. It can acknowledge and address poverty, cultural and gendered norms that are larger contributors to the current disparity of access to girls' and women's education.



## **Role of Women in Health and Food Security will Redefine Sustainable Futures**

Women in health care and food security will bring a more sustainable future to fulfill the needs of their families. Reiterating the importance of women taking cognizance of various policies that impact their and their families' lives, experts shared that women have to get more pro-actively involved in advocating for a people-centric policy process in several areas, like the drug policy, the pharmaceutical policy, agriculture policy and food policy.

Women tend to be the last to learn about these and least informed about their impacts. The need for rational use of drugs and advocating for affordable and accessible drugs is a critical issue.

Emphasising that in medical education, gender is missing and doctors lack sensitivity on issues relating to equity and healthy, the need to include these issues in formal medical and allied education was outlined.

The National Nutrition Policy being drafted in India must give importance to traditionally healthy foods like Amaranth, dals and oils. The need for saving traditional nutritious grains and seeds was also emphasised. Related issues pertain to pesticides, genetically modified crops, and excessive fertilizer use, etc., which have serious impacts on health.

Calling for better bio-safety norms and better community education, experts opined that women have to be made aware of the impacts of food and nutrition on health. Appropriate education and traditional wisdom that focuses on sustainable options are critical inputs for sustainable rural development. It is linked to good health and financial security of families.

### **Rights and Entitlements**

Another area of critical concern is the lack of engagement of women's groups, women's development programmes in education. In South Asia women's empowerment work, be it through government programmes, rights based

groups, civil society organisations autonomous women's groups and development practitioners have focused on issues of health, violence, political participation and livelihoods.

Micro credit groups have emerged across the region, as a means of promoting economic empowerment in the region. Access to finance and skills are essential and in view of lack of assets in women's names (land, entitlements), it is very hard for women to access resources to improve their lives and aspirations, fulfill their basic needs, and take on newer roles in a changing society. A flexible approach in policy is required to provide access to credit and finance, on terms that are easy on women, and people living in the bottom of the pyramid.

Suitable policies that impact women's lives and ensure food and nutritional security, health and access to cost-effective drugs, provide a safe political and labour environment are critical to enable women to participate fully.

In areas of education, special efforts to ensure inclusive policies are in place, and sensitisation of communities to make girls' education accessible and safe are essential to transform the status of South Asian women, and enable them to contribute to the growth and economy.

The need to explore different development pathways that lays emphasis on building natural capital is essential to sustain the resilience in economies.

### **Scaling up Training and Skills Development**

Drawing over two decades of experience from Dastakari Haat Samiti, the importance of providing equal access to education and skills for women and the importance of creating a critical mass to be able to advocate as a collective voice and create noticeable impact was reiterated. This can happen by creating platforms for sharing experiences, preparing collective programmes and thus influencing policy. Often it is seen that Government officers do not know best, and often show



### Case Study: Rural BPO led by a Woman

Being the first Rural BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) company, Desicrew Private Limited, showcased a success story of women entrepreneur leading the change, creating many jobs in rural India. The idea was to develop this as a decentralised model. There was a business case, of getting jobs to the people in the rural areas. The idea was to set up a small BPO in a Panchayat village with just two internet connectivity. The small set up runs in three shifts.

The path has been a challenging one, but with experience it has grown and done better. The company currently works with life insurance companies, processing their insurance policy. Their other clients include Infosys HR department helping to sort resumes, Google, AOL, Google Maps plotting, etc.

As the model evolved, constant tweaking became a corporate strategy, to make sure the model works. As a continuously learning organization, the team members and management was growing with the model.

Rural BPO provides a huge opportunity for rural educated women. Most women are not allowed to go to another city for work. The trends are now changing though. In the first three years, 75 percent were women. The salaries are going out on time and with employee benefits and sense of 'empowerment' – a lot of boys are also joining our business, and lots of resumes coming our way. Now the ratio of men and women is 50-50.

The idea of promoting a high technology business in rural area stems from the belief that IT can bridge the rural-urban divide.





disrespect to the life-time experiences of the people, especially from the crafts sector.

Similar experiments have been done in the past at small scale, but to scale it up and reach the lakhs of villages is a challenge. Traditional sustainable wisdom needs to find a stronger voice in the SAARC region. An important advocacy agenda is to improve trade practices in the South Asian region for traditional arts, culture and crafts. Also there is need to strengthen our voice as a collective, going beyond a single country. There is also the challenge that the crafts sector faces, i.e. that of corporate influence of the Planning Commission in India, and reduction in number of schemes to support the arts and crafts sector (having reduced to 14 from 22 Schemes in India).

### **Systematic Skills Upgradation to Promote Women Entrepreneurship**

In an increasingly globalizing world, new livelihoods opportunities can be created for women, in both urban and rural areas, especially to promote entrepreneurship. Women require support by way of training, enhancement of skills, access to resources and finance.

While livelihoods provide sustenance and subsistence to families and reaches informal markets or collective markets, enterprises are formalised with a link to the market economy and builds both capital and skills. It is an informed choice made by entrepreneurs enabling enhancement of skills and role model development. Reiterating that the creation of huge number of Self Help Groups (SHG) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission is an appropriation of local organising, experts critiqued the policy paralysis and lack of innovative ideas in India.

Experts called for creation of Role Models in both urban and rural settings, and recognising differential needs of women. For SHGs, leadership skills have to be imparted, specially designed for women. Advocating for more women to enter Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and to design bridge courses, improvement in infrastructure and short term courses for

women was suggested. Such a strategy would be of value not only to India, but also to the all the 9 countries represented in the TARAGram Yatra.

Since migration for better livelihoods is a reality in the entire South Asian region, assisted migration programmes must focus on increased employability skills to women and offer better security. Social protection for informal sector needs to change (insurance, health cover, etc.).

New models of entrepreneurship promotion and skills development programmes are needed to move more women to formal sectors. We have to move from basic needs discourse to strategic needs discourse, and from economic opportunity creation to enabling women for making decisions (to fulfill their aspirational needs). For example, when women are asked to make decisions for their children, they put emphasis on educating their children and at village level, participatory decision making on infrastructure priorities articulated by women are different than those done by men.

Value chain efforts are needed to fulfill women's aspirational needs. There has to be an ecosystem approach and going beyond security and family incomes, and must emphasise on access to finance and effective institutional linkages.

### **Fulfilling Emerging Women's Aspirations**

Capacity of the people, especially women is closely connected with the opportunity to be skilled to deliver. It is important to ask the following questions when Skill Development Programme are being designed:

- Who are we talking about?
- In skill development – who is that learner?
- What is their current skill level?
- What are their aspirations?
- What are their abilities to access resources and finance?



### Mentha (*Mentha arvensis*) Cultivation for Livelihood Enhancement and Biodiversity Conservation in the Buffer Zone of Bardia National Park (BNP), Bardia, Nepal

The project was implemented by National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) with support from UNEP - APFED Show case Project 2009. The project was implemented in two Village Development Committee (VDC) of Bardia - Thakurdwara and Suryapatuwa VDCs lying in buffer zone area of BNP. Bardia National park is the largest national park in the lowland Terai covering an area of 968 sq km with rich biodiversity. An area of 507 sq km surrounding the park was declared as a buffer zone which is jointly managed by the park and local communities. The main aim of the buffer zone is to institute the conservation spirit among the people for the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources. The project aimed to reinstate the equilibrium between the socio-economic dynamics and ecological balance of the area. The project focused on (i) exploring the solution for crop depredation by wildlife; (ii) mitigating human-wildlife conflicts; (iii) improving the economic condition of indigenous people and (iv) raising awareness on biodiversity conservation of national park.

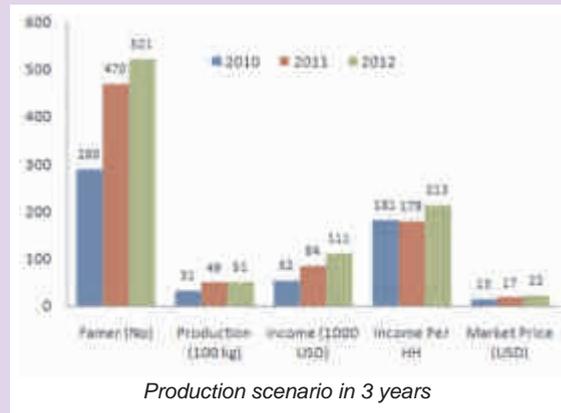
The project focused on growing aromatic crops (e.g. mentha, lemon grass and chamomile) in the fringe areas. 615 farmers were trained in aromatic plants' cultivation techniques (including poor, marginalised and women). Supporting farmers with seeds/suckers and sprouts of chamomile, mentha and lemongrass for its cultivation, the project enabled 535 farmers to adopt alternative crops (mentha and chamomile) as a major crop in 2010, 765 farmers in 2011 and 559 in 2012, as well as two communities growing them in marginal lands. The project installed eight distillation units and handed over to the community for its overall management. The project also facilitated for marketing the products (essential oils).

Eighty education sessions involving 3516 members helped to disseminate information on biodiversity conservation. Thirteen eco clubs were formed around the school of the park boundary performed conservation awareness activities such as street drama, quiz contest, conservation songs competition, celebration of world environment day, wetland day, biodiversity day etc.

Growing alternative crops esp. mentha is a socio-environmental solution approach for biodiversity conservation. Such activities ultimately assure active participation and involvement of local community in biodiversity and local stewardship to biodiversity could be ascertained. It is because, it has been proven that the successful management of protected areas ultimately depends on the cooperation and support of local people. The result indicates a significant increase in profit through mentha cultivation. A farmer earns 1200 USD/ha if mentha is cultivated, compared to about 400 USD/ha from wheat. The mentha crop cultivation is not replacing any staple crops moreover, it is producing additional income in fallow period or in off-season.

More importantly, it showed that crop depredation by wildlife in the mentha cultivation season was decreased significantly. The majority (79%) of farmers cultivating mentha experienced no crop raiding. Along with economic empowerment, the project also aimed in raising awareness regarding biodiversity conservation among community people.

Mentha plays an important role in repelling wildlife from farmland, but it can be grown only in winter and spring seasons. It is necessary to promote other unpalatable crops such as chamomile, lemon grass, citronella, marigold, sacred basil in order to minimize annual crop damage. It was learnt that aromatic crops should be promoted only in those lands which lie contiguous to the park boundary and where crop damage by wildlife is severe. Rabin Kadariya, Email: rkadariya@yahoo.com, phone: +977-9858025107





- What market linkages are needed to create the opportunities for enhanced incomes?
- How to fulfill the aspiration of the people?

Women and men, seek opportunity to explore and understand how the training that they will get will make a difference to their lives. 68.2 percent of learners who want to be skilled are women. They are interested in many sectors like handicraft, handloom, supervisor, carpenter, health awareness etc. It is very important to create dignity to the skills for women while fulfilling their aspiration.

Any skills development programme must fulfill dreams and deliver opportunities and market linkages. Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) is central to fast-track these aspects, including creation of scalable opportunities.

When the learner has to choose between degrees and skills, they will definitely opt for skills that will lead to suitable employment that enhances their earning capacities. South Asia region needs a strategic plan that maps the needs and market potential that should lead to the design of Skill Development Regional Programme for the South Asian region to cater to the 1.64 billion people looking for employability options.

### **Capacity Building and Training Systems Support**

The Yatris travelled to Orchha and session began with a round of introductions and mapping expectations from the dialogue. The sessions were divided into three thematic areas to discuss various concept notes and workshop ideas that were drawn in preparation to the TARAGram Yatra 2012. 18 proposals were received and collated into the three thematic areas covering

- (i) Entrepreneurship and livelihoods enhancement;
- (ii) Empowerment for basic needs; and
- (iii) Leadership and political participation.

On the first day, participants had an opportunity to visit the TARAGram Mela, which showcased some of the sustainable development initiatives and economic and cultural activities by community women, who organised a local market.

The concepts and ideas prepared by various participants got strengthened by showcased UNEP's APFED projects where successful experience sharing helped to enrich the proposal development. The field experiences from grassroots informed the direction for scalability while bearing in mind the local realities.

The sessions on the rest of the days were designed to provide technical insights on

- (i) regional priorities and policy imperatives for scaling up;
- (ii) training and capacity building support
- (iii) designing an action plan for sustainable development (coordinated action plan development process).

"The Road map to Sustainable Development: Women Driving Change" will build on the collective direction that has been articulated in the July 2012 Kathmandu Declaration of SWAN.

### **Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods Enhancement: Capacity Building Framework for South Asian Sustainable Development Strategy**

Database of women crafts persons, weavers, traders and people engaged in farm and non-farm sectors is essential to ensure that we can engage them as trainers. As the global trends create new skills and livelihoods opportunities, women have to be retrained. Creating leaders and trainers is a crucial input to designing a successful capacity building framework.

We need to create role models, and media women can be trained to highlight sustainable development issues, including use of ICTs and social media. Leadership training is required for SHGs. Access to finance and gender budgeting skills are important inputs to ensure that women at the bottom of the pyramid and addressing



### **Solid Waste Management through women's participation in Gokarneshwor VDC in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal**

Marsyangdi Rural Development Organization (MARDO) has with the support of UNEP APFED programme worked in Gokarneshwor village, in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal to establish a successful waste management programme with women's involvement. The challenges faced by the community was that there is no solid waste management agency, and since the site does not lie in the municipality area, people tend to dump solid waste in the open area, in a mixed manner, or inside forests or along river banks or throw into the river.

#### **The project engaged in six activity areas:**

- Coordination, management and technical assistance: Through partnerships, defining responsibilities, and developing tools and materials for project implementation;
- Establishment of waste management demonstration parks: The slope land used for dumping waste was converted to a demonstration park, now used as place for interaction and recreational area . After the project completion, park was handed over to Temple Development Committee. Women from the village also regularly plant flowers in the park.
- Solid Waste Management (SWM) through women's participation: Women underwent training on segregation of the organic (90%) and inorganic wastes (10%). 70 households received the compost bins of 100 L capacity. These families had no earlier practice of composting for use as manure. One filling of bin yields about 10-15 kg of readymade compost. To manage the inorganic wastes, women were trained to make plastic crafts like mats, ropes, tea mats, etc. Milk wrappers were sorted and sold for re-use. Plastic bottles were re-used for storing water. Jute bags replaced poly bags, thus reducing waste generation.
- Benchmark study of waste disposal in public place and rivers: Activities focused on photo documentation in 7 points selected as a tool to monitor the current situation and track progress periodically. The project made a dramatic improvement with changed people's behavior.
- Support for income generating activities: Women (from 30 households) were trained on mushroom cultivation, has exposure visits and encouraged to take up this activity.
- Waste management education and awareness campaigns: Formation of Eco-clubs in schools and active participation by the students on the events such as Essay, Painting competition. 173 students of 7 schools have been involved in awareness campaign and eco-club formation.



#### **Lessons Learned:**

- For the successful programs to be implemented, people should be provided with incentives (income generating activities)
- These activities become sustainable only if it is of their interest (It is a lesson learnt from the mushroom cultivation), which, unfortunately, could not be continued due to lack of resources to support scaling up.



basic needs issues like health, education, land and natural resources are prepared to scaled-up operations.

Capacity building of medical professionals and sensitisation of various stakeholders to gender concerns, including violence against women, issues faced by migrant persons, in jobs, and skilled employment also need to be addressed. Special skill enhancement programmes designed for upgradation of skills are required to ensure that women can be part of the sustainable development process.

Enhanced funding for gender responsive science and technology programmes critical to ensure that women are at the centre-stage of sustainable future, be it in the domain of health care, information technology, alternative and renewable energy technologies, climate change adaptation technologies, or sustainable farming practices, etc. These have to bear in mind the local realities of the South Asian region, and peace and good governance, along with the wealth of traditional knowledge will contribute to fast-track adaptation of capacity building strategies.

Training and capacity building programmes can be done in a systematic and orderly manner and we can learn from experiences of organisations like MYRADA in India, which can provide strategic training systems and design for scalable targets.

Other key areas in which large-scale capacity development programmes have to be designed include: life skills for access to justice; support for women human right defenders; designing inclusive education that also preserves the local cultural and linguistic diversity (along with biodiversity).

Gender sensitisation programmes for men and women are critical to ensure safe and equitable development goals for South Asia. Capacity mapping and skills requirements mapping are essential to outline and document the growing aspiration of women in South Asia.

Networking and creating international

linkages will enable women in the region to benefit from the increasingly globalised world for not only showcasing their expertise and unique skills, but also to create a global market and knowledge sharing platform.

As women move up the economic ladder and reach basic financial security, the high-skills and high-paying jobs becomes their new aspiration. Skill and academic entry specially reserved for women to break the glass ceiling are required to ensure that equitable opportunities are created for women to participate at all levels of decision making and contributing to national economic growth.

Capacity building programmes must be designed to make women change makers and become role models for others to follow. Evidence based research and documentation of success stories and good practices will enable us to design do-able capacity building programmes and create 100,000 grassroots leaders of change. For example,

- Solid Waste Management as income generating activity for women
- Eco-trekking – young girls as guides + income generation for women in rural areas
- Toilet services for tourists – by women
- TARA Akshar+ made over 60,000 women literate
- Promoting of culture and products through tourism
- Product diversification strategies that have enabled communities to multiply their incomes
- Capacity building on business management and financial management
- Building ability to deal with market forces – conceptual training for NGOs

For SDG for South Asia, where women are driving change, capacity building programmes have to enable women to move from the Will to Act to a level where



### TARA Akshar+: A magical approach to literacy solutions

TARA Akshar+ is a computer based functional literacy programme including basic Arithmetic, developed by Development Alternatives (DA) Group. It is highly successful and cost effective method for helping illiterate people learn to read, write and do simple arithmetic. Using advanced learning and memory techniques and modern information technology, it can teach a person how to read a newspaper, write a letter and do simple calculations with up to 3-digit numbers – all in well under two months of classroom learning, with a daily class of well under two hours.

With support from various Government and NGOs, the TARA Akshar Literacy programme has been tested and proved with over 61,000 women who were completely illiterate. The students were spread over 280 locations in 8 States of Northern India. It is a full, standardized package of learning facilities, methods, and materials delivered by a cadre of managers, instructors, quality control supervisors and testing experts.

The software uses a mix of:

- a. Advanced memory techniques like memory hooks through animated movies.
- b. Strong learning reinforcement mechanisms using rapid-fire video gaming concepts.

c. Uses a technique similar to that of 'Synthetic Phonics', in which the letter sounds are taught first and then sounds are blended together to achieve pronunciation of whole words.

d. The software contains two main types of lesson:

- Ø An animated cartoon story
- Ø A test on what was learnt in the story
- Ø The core of each animated cartoon story is an individual animation based on a specific letter of the Hindi alphabet. Each individual animation shows a morph – a graduated animation – between a letter, and an object which acts as a memory hook for that letter



The results from this large test sample have been extraordinary. Both the dropout rate and the failure rate are less than 1.5%. TARA Akshar+ is the only literacy/numeracy method that can solve the illiteracy problem of India within a reasonable cost and a finite time-scale.

The programme has been recognized by National Literacy Mission (India) as an alternate ICT based solution to adult literacy. It has been nominated and been chosen a finalist in the prestigious e-India Awards and Stockholm Challenge Awards. It has won the honorable mention in the Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award. Such extraordinary results and widespread reach is not possible without a technology based intervention. The use of technology has enabled to overcome challenges of social disparities, learning disabilities, geographical isolation and many others.



skills capacitate them with Ability to Act and finally with the Ability to Sustain Initiatives. Thus sensitisation programmes, role model development, case stories, and skill development and enhancement programmes, professional capacities to access and manage resources are essential to be supplemented finally by skills to take leadership roles.

### **South Asian Women in Large Numbers can Influence Global Sustainable Development Agenda**

The engagement of women is central to a new development paradigm. The new agenda setting is a process in which communities will need to reflect on sustainable development. Several themes that are being discussed internationally are of significance to South Asian region. There are good practices in South Asia that will determine the future way forward. People have to look at development from women's experiences and perspectives and there has to be inward reflection. This is central to driving change.

Work has to be done right from the local level to the national level to regional and international levels. We have to dialogue more and engage with various stakeholders across countries in South Asia and emphasise issues of importance to our region. Peace, Cultural Diversity, Conservation, Linguistic Diversity, Environmental Conservation and several developmental issues have been central to the South Asian region. We must highlight them as sustainable development priorities for 2015 and beyond.

We have to move away from a project mode and move towards a paradigm shift, a way of long-term change.



### 3. Promoting Leadership and Political Participation to Drive Large Scale Change

#### **Ensuring Women's Political Participation Critical to Drive Large-scale Change**

For countries emerging out of strife, like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, South Asian level meetings are important learning opportunities. Afghanistan being land locked country faces some geographical disadvantages. While many are ready to invest, the region continues to face internal conflicts. Security is a precondition to assert women's rights. Under these circumstances, talking on women and policy making for sustainable development requires also discussions on role of women in peace and reconstruction processes. Peace and sustainable development are closely linked.

Women's participation at decision making levels, from a South Asian perspective requires discussions around providing market spaces for promoting grassroots women's work. Further, it needs attention on enhancing skills and capacities in design, marketing, and financial management for women who earn their livelihoods from agro-economic and artisanal sector.

As observed by experts from Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, etc., the lack of market space in neighbouring countries and international markets and lack of skills and training continues to pose a barrier for ensuring that women in agriculture, dairy and crafts get linkages to markets (over 60% of women are engaged in these sectors). Policy makers often ignore half the population (women). There are important lessons to be learnt from European Union (EU) which allows for free flow for trade, cooperation even while the countries are independent. The South Asian region can learn from EU and attempt to draw lessons for this region. Common currency is another important area that needs to be explored. Women are facing several challenges, with less than 20% literate in Afghanistan, the right to be part of decision making is still a far-

etched dream for women. The importance of knowledge exchanges to reach the people in countries like Afghanistan and Myanmar was reiterated.

Scalability of impact and women driving the change will only happen, if we continue to encourage dialogue, knowledge and technology transfer and provide skill development programmes to empower women. This was voiced as an important area of policy advocacy in the entire South Asian region.

#### **Understanding Key Stakeholders for Advocacy Strategy**

If governments are an impediment to development process, then we have to find a way around it. It is important to demonstrate to them the value of environment to sustainable development. The advocacy strategy that we need to apply extends beyond the line ministries that we often work with. There are two important ministries that need to be sensitised on protecting the environment. They are: the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commissions. These can be done aptly using the language of economics. These are possible by using tools like cost benefit analysis, return on investment, etc.

Emphasising the need to improve relationship of government to private sector and the civil society organisations (CSOs), the UNEP expert suggested regular dialogues and interactions to advocate for a cultural transformation. Mainstreaming is a good strategy to achieve cultural transformation. Advocacy strategy must ensure close engagement of government officials and showcasing of success stories.

#### **Promoting Leadership and Political Participation**

The region has experienced democracy with varying levels of engagement of women. The legal provisions in some countries like Nepal, India, Bhutan, etc.



have enabled both decentralisation and democratic participatory processes that create opportunities for women to take leadership positions. However, there is still a big gender divide. The issues that confront the region include lack of good governance – training required for elections, lack of confidence to participate politically. The patriarchal society in the region as well as religious mind-sets places the social status of women low, and increased incidences of violence against women have been barriers to ensuring that the laws are translated to reality.

Good practices like Good Governance training for 4000 women in UP for panchayat level elections (DA) in India have been one of the many efforts to build confidence among women to take part in political processes.

UNEP has been training journalists on how to report on environmental issues and also offered them fellowships. Similar initiatives in media across South Asia for ensuring women's political participation clubbed with sensitisation of their role as documenters' of the change process can be a valuable way forward.

Other initiatives like sensitising men in media have also resulted in better coverage of women's leadership roles as was done in the Aga Khan Support Programme in Pakistan.

Women Journalists can play a key role to improve government transparency. Leadership and political participation in South Asia can be enhanced if the programmes address various stakeholders at different levels in society. Civil society organisations have a key role in influencing policy. NGOs and CBOs have to be trained as skilled negotiators with clear strategies for policy influence.



## 4. Key Processes Required for Success

### Role of Knowledge Management and Facilitating Dialogues

Different countries in South Asia are at different levels of achievement. Experience sharing across the region is possible through systematic knowledge management processes and use of new media tools. The participants discussed various aspects of processes needed to ensure success.

Knowledge Management processes and tools need to be set in motion across South Asia. These include documentation in various formats and women telling their own stories, as well as formal documentation of good practices.

Knowledge Sharing events/ opportunities have to be created to empower women's groups to learn from neighbouring countries. These events have to be supported to bring experts and practitioners, along with decision makers and development support organisations in one platform. Such multistakeholder events clubbed with field experience sharing by grassroots practitioners, and documentation of their stories are critical design ideas to ensure that learning is fast tracked.

Dialogues (face to face and online) are key to ensure that the ambitious goal of reaching 100,000 women to become leaders who drive change for a sustainable future. Curriculum and modular learning systems can be made available including stories of how women have enabled others to learn.

Communication Systems including the use of mass media, new media and ICTs, community radio, etc. were identified as important tools and processes to ensure that knowledge can flow easily. Role models in media will enable women's groups, policy makers and programme implementers to invest for good practices. Already existing good practices will need to be documented, and platforms for sharing their own stories will need to be told.

### Building Regional Perspectives through Partnerships and Alliances

Eighteen concepts were shared across three thematic areas. The following key issues were raised:

Livelihoods is a cross cutting issue which should focus on rights and access to resources, finance and markets. Community initiatives demonstrate people's abilities to manage natural resources well. Government programmes that aim to scale impactful actions must reflect people's choice. The worrisome trend in South Asian countries of greater control in large scale government projects on people's efforts, but free hand to private sector needs to be addressed.

Community based organisations have to document their experiences and share them with policy makers to bridge the huge gaps that exist between policy and action.

More action research is needed to document the impact of recession, etc. where women lose jobs first. This should include innovative and sustainable local solutions that are specific to certain agro-climatic conditions and niche opportunities.

There is an important link between women's health, safe drinking water (part of food security), nutrition and food security, and regulatory framework for trade should be a matter of concern for women's organisations.

There is a close connect between literacy and livelihoods generation. New and Innovative modes of using ICTs for development which use common processes and guidelines could be useful to design scalable solutions, which can transcend national boundaries for learning and knowledge sharing.

In countries like Myanmar, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, etc. which are recovering from extended periods of conflicts, institutional capacity development is a critical requirement. Intra-regional knowledge



sharing and learning opportunities must be planned to enable countries to fast track the process of sustainable development.

There is need to promote value based leadership capabilities to ensure that women take a sustainable future. It is not enough to be involved in elected positions only. Women need to move from political participation alone to taking central role in governance at all levels. Sensitisation and capacity building needed to bring more women in governance.

Media plays a very important role in charting the pathway to collective sustainable future. To enable more women to be part of the development process, media must focus on telling more positive stories of women making a difference. Media should also be used as a tool for advocacy and capacity building.

#### **Role of Media in Raising Women's Issues in South Asia**

There have been large scale changes as the South Asian region faces natural disasters, conflicts, internal displacement, and refugees. Women are affected most. It is important to tell women's stories, and make them interesting. These new issues are central to the region's priorities. They need to be read. South Asian media network will enable to spread these stories across the region. There is also need to tell positive stories of people-to-people trade, of e-commerce happening already, women leaders are asserting for space and have charismatic persona that must be profiled and prove as an inspiration to others to take up positions of power and decision making. There is also increasing impact of social media, as more educated men and women use them. The stories published in one country can be shared with readers in other countries. Literacy and leadership among women also earns respect for women.

Portrayal of women in the media is an important concern across South Asia that our SWAN group on women in media has been discussing. There is need for sensitisation of media personnel and

editors about this issue. When women's issues are covered, it is more of news or event report and the process reports are often missing. Being part of the mainstream media, it is important to sensitise media women on how to strengthen the voice within the system.

The role of media is to inform, educate and entertain, but due to market forces, currently, media is focusing more on sensationalism and commodification of women. The SWAN Women in Media focuses on: (i) Advocacy; (ii) Capacity Building and (iii) Media as partners in development.

Such initiatives and others using media as an effective tool for knowledge exchange become key processes required to set in motion a massive movement in South Asia.

TARAGram yatrix dedicated themselves to build capacities of 100,000 women leaders who will drive change for sustainable development of the region.



## 5. Gender Framework for Policy Advocacy in South Asia

### The goal

The goal of the South Asian Regional Policy advocacy initiative will be to build and communicate critical gender knowledge in South Asia that challenges the priorities set by governments, development institutions and / or social movements and reconfigure gender knowledge to serve transformation agendas.

### The objective of adopting the gender framework for policy advocacy will be to

1. To develop a conceptual understanding of the theoretical framework that uses State and power as critical resources.
2. To develop a core group of researchers, practitioners and activists from South Asia who will work with the above theoretical framework to interrogate gender and rights issues they are currently working on.
3. Based on this interrogation produce materials for communication, capacity building and advocacy.
4. To disseminate these gender knowledge products widely.

### Priority areas

The following priority areas were identified for addressing and asserting women's equality and rights for South Asian region for sustainable development:

- Do not gender neutralise
- Claim women's human rights and a violence free society
- Realise that it is an ongoing process
- Revisit the frameworks and prior gains made
- Establish backward and forward linkages
- Promote leadership at every step – right to spaces in city and in all institutions (family, enterprises, government, civil society, polity, etc.)
- Promote large scale skill building and capacity building initiatives. These can only be scaled up if appropriate conditions, enablers and support become accessible to women
- Understand that women's empowerment cannot be done in isolation – hardware and software convergence (roads, common areas, etc.)
- Need audit of urban infrastructure, and related policies like
- Focus on women's action research to create new knowledge
- Enable market linkages across the region
- Ensure fast-track and locally relevant capacity programmes are designed to bring equity of opportunities and skills to women
- Ensure access to finance and rights and entitlements to land and natural resources
- Enhance role of women in use of appropriate technologies that are green, save the environment, and manage wastes in a sustainable manner
- Celebrate women's leadership role to enhance their negotiating abilities, decision making and political participation
- Recognise and enhance women's role in preservation of culture, traditional practices and knowledge on sustainable development
- Enable knowledge documentation and knowledge exchanges
- Promote networks and partnerships to ensure collaborations are long-standing and knowledge of good practices flows well



## 6. Technology as an Enabler

### **Appropriate Technologies and Grassroots Action create Opportunities for Women's Empowerment**

In India, the SEED division in the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India focuses on delivering technology models that are suitable to the community, and especially women. These have kept in mind the need for adaptation and localization, and usability across different regions in the country.

Though technology was designed to benefit all, technology is the worst thing that could have happened to women. The terminology 'appropriate technology' was born to focus on technologies that would benefit a particular group of people.

The tools and solutions developed must be mainstreamed and converted into enterprises. While technology solutions have to be generic, they must also be adaptable and suited to local conditions.

Technology is NOT ONLY hardware but also the skills required to use that technology. It also includes system design. For example, solar drier designed to be used for drying apricot pulp; can it be used for other purposes?

When designing technology to be used by women, social scientists have to work on the level of technology, and machinery would have to be suitable designed by the scientist. This approach can lead to substantial augmentation of incomes. There are also important regulatory issues to be taken up in technology in development.

Large scale capacity building of the scale that the team has been thinking of, enabled through knowledge exchange, and a train the trainer model requires South Asian regional organisations to coordinate and have greater interactions.

The recent advancements in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development has provided a number of opportunities to use new media tools for knowledge documentation and sharing. It is also a very effective tool for improving good governance, enabling greater political participation, providing technical capacities to promote entrepreneurship and improving access to basic services like health, water, land, etc.

Inter-country knowledge exchanges, knowledge documentation and dissemination of good practices are also possible to be fast tracked through ICTs. Mobiles have also been a key instrument of social change that has been used by women to bring desired changes, as was demonstrated by participants from Bangladesh and India.

Several of the low-cost and appropriate solutions are possible through innovations and technology development. For women's empowerment, technology is a key enabler. This was demonstrated by various initiatives shared at the TARAGram Yatra and field experiences.

Learning in a mass scale is also possible, as in TARAakshar programme, through ICTs. The value of systematic research, data collection to identify the gaps and defining new programmes is also enabled through technology, as was demonstrated by participants from Nepal and Bhutan.



## Samvedna – Sustainable Initiative towards building Model Green Colleges

Centre for Environment Education with support from UNEP-APFED, South Asian Youth Environment Network (SAYEN) and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Government of Gujarat initiated the project.

### Project objectives:

- Enable youth to take positive action for environment;
- Identifying issues, problems and actions that could be implemented in colleges to develop 'Model Green Colleges'; and
- Share experiences and learning with other youth institutions in India and particularly in South Asia.



Three colleges in Gujarat with varying environmental contexts were chosen. Beginning with sharing information that led to knowledge building and positive attitude led to skill development activities that motivated the members to take action. Each college selected a specific theme. These included waste management, waste water treatment demonstration and establishing biodiversity park.

### Lessons learned:

- Identifying youth as key change agent
- Education and communication is an effective tool to bring about change in youth behavior
- Working with multi stakeholder group broadened the scope and applicability of project outcomes
- Created better understanding of youth psychology



### Way forward:

- Sustaining actions taken in pilot colleges and maintaining the momentum (Sustainability of action)
- Sharing learning from the project and implementing it in other colleges in Gujarat state (Scaling it up)
- Sharing Models of Green Colleges and role of Eco Clubs in same with South Asian countries through UNEP-SAYEN (Knowledge sharing)



## 7. Stimulating Gendered Inclusive Growth: Policy Recommendations

South Asian Networks for women cannot afford to think of one particular model, but has to be receptive to absorbing multiple models and evolve multiple strategies for finding solutions. While lessons can be learnt from national and international programme interventions, knowledge sharing will enable local communities to adapt and innovate.

South Asian priority will continue to be livelihoods enhancement and promotion of entrepreneurship. Focus has to be on building capacities of marginalised women – they are at the bottom of the league. They need to overcome caste, class, gender and other institutional patriarchal bias and discrimination. Intense multi-stakeholder sensitisation programmes have to be developed. Social media and mass media (including traditional folk dance, drama, and theatre and community radio) can play a crucial role in sensitizing the masses about the imminent mind-set change required.

Small scale interventions that are possible by NGOs have to be scaled up, with women who receive training to act as trainers. The Train-the-Trainer model can create a ripple effect and bring rapid transformation. Once people are aware of their rights, and get opportunities for economic empowerment, it will lead to building of social capital, as they aspire for improved quality of life.

### 4.1 Opportunities and Challenges

The ability of working as a collective, as in the Self Help Groups model, enables women, who often do not have entitlements, to enhance their negotiating abilities to access credit and finance, and provides scope for building their entrepreneurial skills. Several success stories exist in the region. A knowledge bank of these case stories are essential to help others to fast track and progress on the path of economic empowerment. When communities and especially women acquire new skills and technologies, they

help in building natural and social capital which is critical to ensure long-term sustainability.

Networking and collective knowledge sharing/banking will provide an opportunity for communities to aggregate their learning and abilities to sustain initiatives, and help them move from the informal sector to formal sector, and be counted as contributing to the country's economic growth. Addressing issues of discrimination and self-esteem among women through leadership trainings will ensure that the momentum is kept up. For this sensitisation has to happen for both men and women.

Keeping the realities of the political environment, enabling communities and women in particular will lead to realignment of social equations, and with it will come new conflicts that need to be resolved. Equity and justice will need to be defined as non-negotiable if we have to make gains.

There is need to re-examine the way traditional training methods have impacted lives of women. Has it really led to empowerment? Have we taken a rights based approach? Have we built their leadership qualities? Are we listening to them? These are important aspects of sustainable development strategies. Even when we view the collective gains of the community, we have to re-examine it from women's perspective.

Tracking progress and creating effective monitoring and evaluation methods is also critical, as sustainable development plans have to be results oriented, but are not easy to measure. Action research can be a useful methodology.

Rigid conceptions of gender role are no longer sustainable in South Asia or anywhere else in the world today. Women must not only participate but lead the realisation of environmentally healthy societies and economies. Millions of



people in the region are now recognising that they cannot even begin to hope for sustainable development within their communities without fully engaging one half of the population in the process. This is why achieving women's leadership through the work of people in this room is on par with all other pressing global issues including ending poverty, bringing peace, and reducing impacts of climate change.

While so many of the participants, and several others in the civil society, have already met remarkable goals and succeeded in the most challenging of environments to open up doors to women there are so many other gender linked environmental issues to overcome. The secret to tackle these diverse issues lies in the building of strong partnerships. With partnerships, we are able to build up and to combine our expertise and unique abilities to advance women to achieve sustainable development in the region.

#### **4.2 Way Forward: Innovative Approaches to Move from Ideas to Innovative Action**

The question, "how can we implement effectively what is already in place in policies?" has been asked throughout the deliberations of the TARAGram Yatra.

To answer this there is one basic building block that is the corner stone of making an impact within all of these important sectors that you work on. It is the thing that drives each and every one of us to continue working for a better natural world for women and this little thing is Ideas. Ideas are the softest yet most powerful force in the shaping of our societies. Ideas are capable of spreading without limit. They are behind all of the choices that are behind all the choices that people make in their daily lives and are the very base of a community value system.

Spreading ideas on women's empowerment can transform the world in a way government's top down policies cannot. Working for peace by encouraging women to take up the role of leadership makes more sense than fighting for peace through politics, armies, or political power.

With the spread of the ideas shared the participants felt that they can make real change for the women in South Asia that can last.

#### **Promoting Multi-stakeholder Partnerships**

Not only research institutions, civil society organisations, private businesses and even local governments have been the key to success of the projects. Under the APFED showcase programme the power or partnerships have been harnessed in order to open up green markets and to link biodiversity conservation with poverty alleviation in which women have played a large role. The building of such partnerships offers new energy to our work ethic, and generates new and innovative ideas for driving change.

Partnerships that brought together the women of SWAN who are truly inspiring and who give sustainable development goals a strong female voice in South Asia. Ultimately partnerships help to turn highest quality research into action on the ground which yields tangible results and which is reaffirmed through the field visits.

The need and the right of women to participate and lead the advancement in the quality of their own lives is universally recognised and acknowledged by the United Nations as it is with many South Asian Governments. Yet it is evident that policy has not yet replaced many deeply engraved beliefs at the grassroots level.

#### **Learning from Multitude of Experiences and Field Visits**

A wealth of knowledge that enables leading practitioners to more effectively manage from the regional level, to more efficiently assess project outcomes and impacts and to look through the lens of women's empowerment within the field of biodiversity conservation. The task ahead is to devise ways of transforming natural rights into realities for the women of South Asia.

#### **TARAGram: An Effective Knowledge Exchange Platform**



The importance of women's leadership in the agenda for peace was emphasised at the Yatra. Conference forums such as TARAGram Yatra are incredibly valuable for this kind of knowledge sharing. This leads to the generation of new concepts and innovative approaches for strengthening the voices of women across the region. Income generation and economies about project funding and capacity building, access to health care, natural resources, and food security and the media. These have to be continuously recorded and shared across the region, through a knowledge exchange platform.

Success stories and good practices that can be an inspiration to all in the South Asian region will be critical to provide scalable results. TARAGram is an effective knowledge exchange platform, and this process of recording the changes over the next three years, and agenda setting by women for sustainable future of South Asia must be undertaken.



# TARAgam YATRA 2012

inspiring sustainability

## Sustainable Development in South Asia

*Women Driving Change*



### Section III

22-25 November 2012

Development Alternatives World Headquarters  
New Delhi

and

TARAgam Orchha, Madhya Pradesh







## Women Leading Sustainable Development in South Asia: Action Plan Potential for Impact and Strategic Imperatives

### Key Learning from TARAGram Yatra 2012

In the Section II, the participants deliberated on various aspects relating to women taking on a leadership role. They examined the key conditions for women to drive change. Delving on women's perspectives and current environment for catalyzing change, they delved on peace and security, assisted migration, human rights approach and reducing violence against women to be ensured to enable sustainable development.

### Key enablers

The key enablers that will drive change in the three thematic areas of empowerment, viz, fulfillment of basic needs, i.e., access to education and health; promoting livelihoods and entrepreneurship; and leadership and political participation were dealt with. Stating the importance of addressing policy issues, capacity building issues, using rights based approach to entitlements and access to finance, they emphasized the importance of a gender framework for policy advocacy in South Asia. They also identified large scale capacity building can happen when technologies and innovation plays the role of an enabler and to fast track the skill development strategies.

### Key processes

The key processes required to make it happen was discussed in detail. The following areas were identified:

- Knowledge Management processes and tools need to be set in motion across South Asia. These include documentation in various formats and women telling their own stories, as well as formal documentation of good practices
- Knowledge Sharing events/ opportunities have to be created to empower women's groups to learn

from neighbouring countries

- Dialogues (face to face and online) are key to ensure that the ambitious goal of reaching 100,000 women to become leaders who drive change for a sustainable future
- Communication Systems including the use of mass media, new media and ICTs, community radio, etc. were identified as important tools and processes to ensure that knowledge can flow easily. Role models in media will enable women's groups, policy makers and programme implementers to invest for good practices
- Networks and Partnerships organized thematically and inter-country wise are very important processes to ensure impact of action at the grassroots level
- Collaborative implementation projects will be important to showcase the pathway to sustainable development practices that can be scaled up
- Action research to track progress is very important to benchmark and add to the knowledge systems
- Indicators for benchmarking success - women's empowerment and sustainable development. For programmatic measure of success, new tools and indices for measuring progress is required

### Specific ideas shared

- Build on SWAN's Kathmandu Declaration while defining the Sustainable Development Goals highlighting some of the key priority areas of importance to women of South Asia.
- Create an action plan that is reflective of the realities of women in South Asia.
- Need to create more p2p business and success story sharing within the region



- establish a network of SWAN business women to link trade/business
- Evidence based research on good practices are needed
- Laws to promote enterprise development (laws and policy)
- Need to review development programmes from a gender perspective and to build it from a human rights and CEDAW framework.
- Identify barriers for women to enter businesses, including access to timely and affordable finance
- Need to sensitise medical graduate students on gender issues
- Advocate against current laws and policies that commodify health (medical tourism, ART Bill, drugs policy, etc.)
- Work on ensuring land rights and political participation is key to access to resources like fuel, water, medicinal plants, seeds, etc.
- Contribute proactively towards a safe National Nutrition Policy
- Healthy and holistic approach essential. New and innovative indicators that measure 'Health per acre' concept – build leaders in this domain
- If this region aims to improve its human development index, further advocacy and work is needed that focuses on Girls' Education. The curriculum also needs to be engendered.
- All national policies and regional trade and cooperation agreements have to focus on holistic development – policy advocacy and capacity building are central to achieving sustainable development.
- Engage pro-actively in preserving cultural and linguistic diversity and strength of women's groups in playing a key role.
- Women's networks must partner with international groups that actively promote culture (UNESCO).
- Peace is a very important common goal which should be the basis of all action plans.
- Need to engage more actively in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals – through concerted action plan and people's sustainability treaty, and through more thematic and South Asian level dialogues among multiple stakeholders.
- Build muliti stakeholder coordinated research proposal that builds on already existing alliances and strengthens the region.

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<sup>i</sup> 1 lakh = 100,000

<sup>ii</sup> Dals are pulses  
(leguminous grains rich in proteins)



# TARAgam YATRA 2012

inspiring sustainability

## Sustainable Development in South Asia

*Women Driving Change*



## Annexures

22-25 November 2012

Development Alternatives World Headquarters  
New Delhi

and

TARAgam Orchha, Madhya Pradesh







## Presentations

Day I - 22nd Nov 2012

**Introduction - *history and concept***

Annual event of the Development Alternatives Group, designed to deliberate on germane issues of development

- ❖ **Mission - Inspire sustainability** in policy and practice especially in the South and South East Asian Region
- ❖ **Partnership** with international learning organisations
- ❖ **Platform** for exchanging cutting edge ideas to realize a sustainable future.

Logos: Development Alternatives, UNEP, APFD, and another organization.

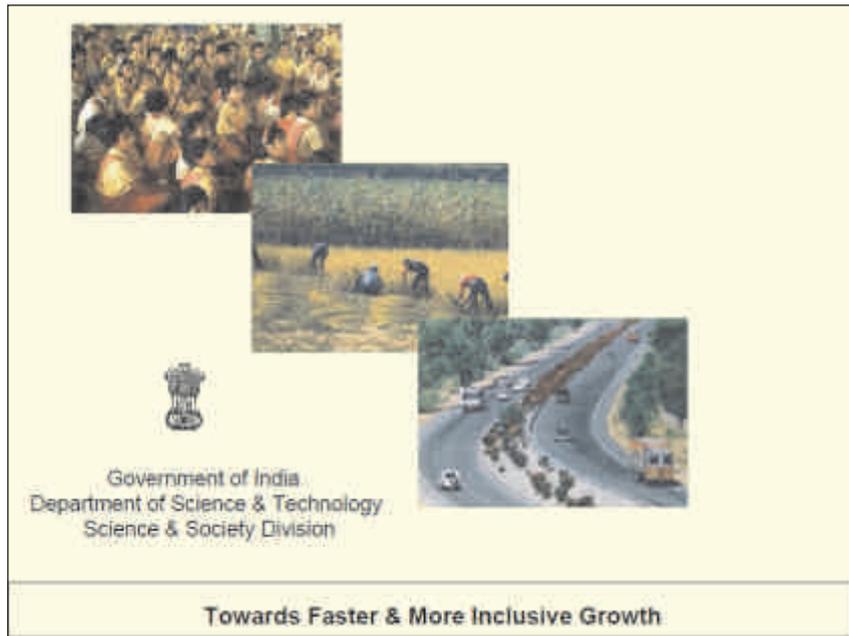
[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Introduction\\_TGY2012.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Introduction_TGY2012.pdf)

**Sustainable Development  
– A Holistic View**

**TARAGram Yatra 2012**

**Ashok Khosla  
Development Alternatives**

[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Sustainable\\_Development\\_Whole.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Sustainable_Development_Whole.pdf)



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster\\_More\\_Inclusive\\_Growth.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster_More_Inclusive_Growth.pdf)

**Day II - 23rd Nov 2012**



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding\\_Gender\\_Education.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding_Gender_Education.pdf)



Sustainable Solid Waste Management  
Through Women Participation in Gokarneswor  
(VDC) of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal



APFED Showcase  
Project- 2007

Maneesha Shakya  
Marsyangdi Rural Development Organization (MARDO)  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Marsyangdi Rural Development Organization  
(MARDO)

[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster\\_More\\_Inclusive\\_Growth.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster_More_Inclusive_Growth.pdf)



• Literacy is base to any empowerment needs

• Solutions:

- Fast and effective
- Quality control mechanisms
- Output oriented



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding\\_Gender\\_Education.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding_Gender_Education.pdf)



## Sustainable Development in South Asia– Women Leaders Driving Change

A case of Nepal with reference to SAARC  
countries



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster\\_More\\_Inclusive\\_Growth.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster_More_Inclusive_Growth.pdf)

**Day III - 24th Nov 2012**

## Capacity Building for Disempowered Women: Broad approach and Menu of Tools and Techniques

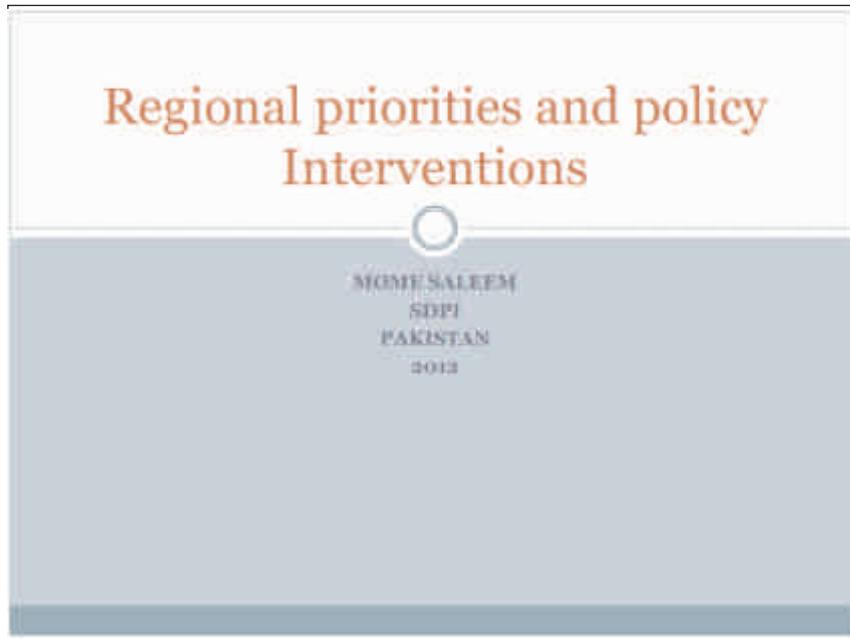
25<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
Orchha

Development Alternatives

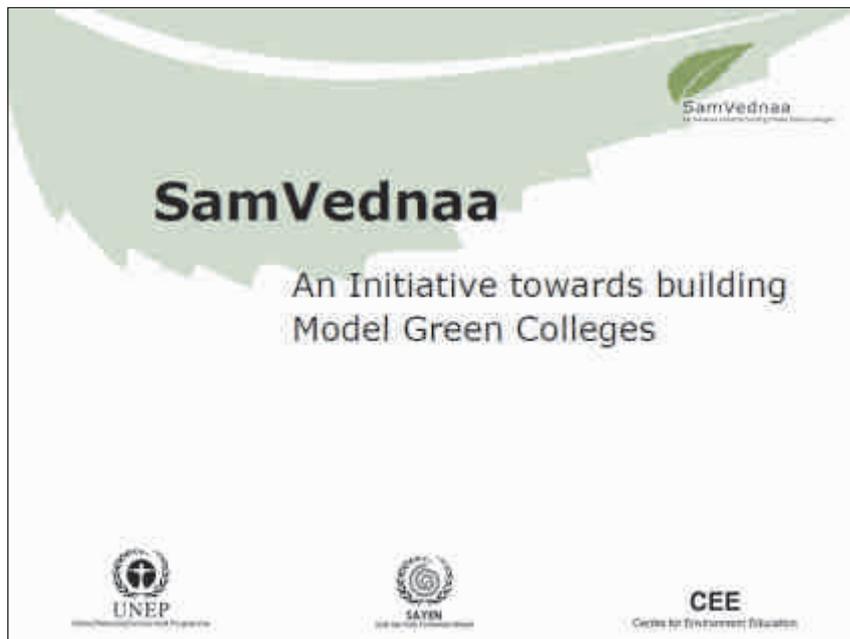
[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding\\_Gender\\_Education.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day2/Understanding_Gender_Education.pdf)



Day IV - 25th Nov 2012



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster\\_More\\_Inclusive\\_Growth.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster_More_Inclusive_Growth.pdf)



[http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster\\_More\\_Inclusive\\_Growth.pdf](http://www.taragramyatra.org/pdf-files/Day1/Faster_More_Inclusive_Growth.pdf)



**Official list of MDG indicators**

*All indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban/rural as far as possible*

Effective 15 January 2008

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)		
Goals and Targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress	Gender Analysis
<p><b>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b></p> <p>Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</p>	<p>1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day</p> <p>1.2 Poverty gap ratio</p> <p>1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption</p>	<p>Goal 1 views poverty as lack of income and food, but poor women experience poverty in many ways, including economic, social and political marginalization. The Millennium Development Goals do not support non-poor women whose security and human rights are threatened by, for example, domestic violence or barriers to political participation.</p> <p>The goals have a limited view of empowerment as a technical goal to be implemented by the same decision makers and institutions that have disempowered women in the past.</p> <p>The paralyzing effect of poverty on women's ability (sometimes described as 'agency') to overcome inequality is not recognized or addressed.</p> <p>The goals adopt an instrumental approach on gender that uses women to deliver other aims without really addressing gender inequality or the needs and priorities of women.</p>
<p>Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p>	<p>1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed</p> <p>1.5 Employment-to-population ratio</p> <p>1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day</p> <p>1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment</p>	<p>Four articles of CEDAW provide a rights framework for review. These must be analysed with this approach.</p> <p>CEDAW 3: Guarantee of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, including from hunger</p> <p>CEDAW 1 &amp; 2: Eliminate all forms of discrimination against women</p> <p>CEDAW 11: Employment – the right to work is an inalienable right of human beings, eliminate discrimination in the workplace, equal pay and benefits for work of equal value</p> <p>CEDAW 13(b): The right of women to equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit.</p>
<p>Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p>	<p>1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age</p> <p>1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption</p>	<p>ICESCR 11(2): Food was first declared a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, and reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966. Article 11 (2) of the ICESCR establishes 'the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger'.</p> <p>Women are affected the most during economic crisis. Thus, macro-economic policies should be pro-poor. Women in poor families are most disadvantaged</p>



<p><b>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</b></p> <p>Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</p>	<p>2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education</p> <p>2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary</p> <p>2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men</p>	<p>because they need to care for families even when they face loss of jobs.</p> <p>Completion of primary education alone does not lead to jobs.</p> <p>Some countries like Bhutan have negative gender ratio where boys are less likely to be enrolled. Gender Disaggregated data is needed to be analysed from a rights perspective. Any data less than 100% enrolment is unacceptable.</p> <p>Some of the most intractable obstacles to education for girls are socio-cultural. This MDG has not paid much effort on measures to overcome these barriers. Curricula, teaching materials and methods, and attitudes often reinforce gender stereotypes, and these must be reviewed.</p> <p>Discrimination against minority groups is a major cause of girls' non-attendance in School</p> <p>In some countries with high levels of education, the performance of boys is below that of girls</p> <p>Goal 2 overlooks the literacy needs of older women and men</p>
<p><b>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b></p> <p>Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</p>	<p>3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</p> <p>3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector</p> <p>3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</p>	<p>Gender equality covers (i) access to resources and opportunities (ii) capabilities (health, education, nutrition) and (iii) security. Goal 3 is silent on security aspects.</p> <p>Security refers to reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict, which cause physical and psychological harm and reduce the ability of individuals, households and communities to fulfil their potential. Gender-based violence against women and girls is often intended to keep them 'in their place' through fear</p> <p>Priority must be accorded to poor women, adolescents and women living in conflict areas.</p> <p>The priorities for achieving Goal 3 are interdependent with the other goals – and these are now well articulated for empowerment (equality is not the same as empowerment)</p> <p>Increase women's ownership of property and their rights to equal inheritance</p> <p>There is need to reduce gender inequality in paid employment and business</p> <p>Implement gender-responsive budgeting</p> <p>Support women and women's groups to hold governments accountable for their commitments</p> <p>Ensure women's active participation in data collection</p>
<p><b>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</b></p>		



<p>Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</p>	<p>4.1 Under-five mortality rate 4.2 Infant mortality rate 4.3 Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles</p>	<p>Disaggregate data sources on child mortality by age and sex Identify and address the factors that lead to higher mortality among girls where this occurs Identify and address the factors that lead to higher mortality among older boys where this occurs Address the factors that lead to sex-selective abortions of females and conduct more research There is need to target health education and awareness to men also</p>
<p><b>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</b></p>		
<p>Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</p>	<p>5.1 Maternal mortality ratio 5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</p>	<p>Maternal mortality is difficult to measure without a reliable death registration system Maternal mortality is typically approached from a health perspective Women in developing countries lack reproductive health care</p>
<p>Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health</p>	<p>5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate 5.4 Adolescent birth rate 5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits) 5.6 Unmet need for family planning</p>	<p>Men and communities should be targeted for health education on pregnancy and childbirth Maternal health should be considered from perspective of women's rights to reproductive health Genital mutilation is a serious violation of women's reproductive rights and must be eliminated Women should have access to transportation infrastructure and communications Basic reproductive health services should be free and easily accessible to all women Antenatal and delivery services should be prioritized Poorest women are least like to access antenatal care and many pregnant women are not protected against tetanus Adolescent and young women should be specifically targeted by maternal health initiatives</p>
<p><b>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b></p>		
<p>Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years 6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex 6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS 6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-</p>	<p>Women are more vulnerable to HIV infection Men's knowledge of HIV helps protect women Particular groups of women are especially at risk of HIV infection Discrimination and stigma restrict sex workers' access to HIV/AIDS treatment and services Married women are also a risk group needing attention</p>



<p>Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.</p> <p>Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>	<p>14 years</p> <p>6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs</p> <p>6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria</p> <p>6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets</p> <p>6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs</p> <p>6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis</p> <p>6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course</p>	<p>Women need improved access to barrier methods to prevent HIV infection</p> <p>Women need protection from discrimination due to their HIV/AIDS status</p> <p>Women are especially subject to HIV-related stigma</p> <p>Women bear the main responsibility of care for family members with HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Tuberculosis is a major killer of women, but they are less likely than men to obtain treatment</p> <p>Stigma affects women with tuberculosis</p> <p>Sex-disaggregated data on malaria are needed to help increase treatment rates among women (it is not often available)</p> <p>A rights based approach requires that governments must ensure an appropriate share of the national budget is allocated to health</p> <p>Raise awareness and risks faced by women for exposure to HIV/AIDS and improve access to treatment</p>
<p><b>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</b></p> <p>Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</p>	<p>7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest</p> <p>7.2 CO2 emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)</p> <p>7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances</p> <p>7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits</p> <p>Proportion of total water resources used</p> <p>7.5 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected</p> <p>7.6 Proportion of species threatened with extinction</p>	<p>Environmental sustainability and gender equality are interdependent</p> <p>Women are most affected by environmental degradation</p> <p>Women are at high risk of environmental toxins, yet most of the testing is done on men</p> <p>Women should be involved as decision makers in environmental sustainability at all levels. To achieve and effectively carry out these higher-level positions, women (and men) need access to training on environmental management, to be sensitized to the need to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.</p> <p>Clean water and adequate sanitation are human rights. Poor pay more for clean water and lack sanitation facilities, and women are a higher percentage of the most marginalized people</p> <p>Access to clean water and adequate sanitation gives women and girls time for other activities</p> <p>Women, especially female-headed households, need land rights and water for productive uses - women's lack of land rights reduces their access to water</p>



<p>Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p>	<p>7.7 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source 7.8 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility</p>	<p>Women are more vulnerable to natural disasters and their consequences. Disasters have a long term impact on women and girls Adequate sanitation reduces disease and the time women spend on care of the sick Locating water sources and toilets close to home may reduce the risk of violence against women More training is needed for women in water management and sanitation Women need security of tenure and adequate housing, especially in urban slums Women in urban slums need improved infrastructure and services and a political voice We must ensure that economic policies are compatible with the right to safe drinking water</p>
<p>Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	<p>7.9 Proportion of urban population living in slums</p>	
<p><b>Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development</b></p>		
<p>Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally</p>	<p>Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States <u>Official development assistance (ODA)</u> 8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income 8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) 8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied 8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes 8.5 ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes <u>Market access</u> 8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from</p>	<p>Implementation of non-discriminatory trading and financial systems is not gender neutral Increased global partnership resources are needed (for pro-poor, gender responsive and rights based programmes) Increased funding and support is needed to improve gender-responsive data Many targets and indicators under Goal 8 are the responsibility of donor countries and must also become the agenda of the developing country governments International financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, etc.) are also part of the global partnership. Their agendas and reports must also be rights based and gender responsive United Nations agencies and NGOs are also players in the global partnership - However engagement of NGOs is not that high. Policy monitoring and evaluation frameworks have to be made gender responsive. Donor and programmes should mainstream a gender-responsive rights-based perspective</p>
<p>Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports, enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction</p>		
<p>Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)</p>		



<p>Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p>	<p>developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty</p>
<p>Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p>	<p>8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries</p>
<p>Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	<p>8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product</p> <p>8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p> <p>Debt sustainability</p>
	<p>8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p>
	<p>8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDR1 Initiatives</p>
	<p>8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p>
	<p>8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p>
	<p>8.14 Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants</p>
	<p>8.15 Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants</p>
	<p>8.16 Internet users per 100 inhabitants</p>

The Millennium Development Goals and targets come from the Millennium Declaration, signed by 189 countries, including 147 heads of State and Government, in September 2000 (<http://www.un.org/millenniumdeclaration/ares52e.html>) and from further agreement by member states at the 2005 World Summit (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly - A/RES/60/1, <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/wn.asp?m=A/RES/60/1>). The goals and targets are interrelated and should be seen as a whole. They represent a partnership between the developed countries and the developing countries 'to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty'.

<sup>1</sup> For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

<sup>2</sup> The actual proportion of people living in slums is measured by a proxy, represented by the urban population living in households with at least one of the four characteristics: (a) lack of access to improved water supply, (b) lack of access to improved sanitation, (c) overcrowding (3 or more persons per room), and (d) dwellings made of non-durable material.



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### **The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

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### **The Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED)**

The Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED), a regional group of prominent experts officially launched at ECO ASIA (Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific) in 2001 which aims to address critical issues facing Asia and the Pacific region and to propose new models for equitable and sustainable development. The second phase of APFED activities (APFED II), proposed for 2005 and beyond, is intended to promote the implementation of policies, measures and actions recommended in the 2004 APFED final report. APFED II activities consist of three major components: Policy Dialogues, Knowledge Initiative, and Showcase Programmes.

*Website: [www.apfed.net](http://www.apfed.net)*



### **The South Asia Women's Network**

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) is a programme headquartered in The Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central University located in New Delhi (India). Professor Veena Sikri, who holds the Ford Foundation endowed Chair (Bangladesh Studies Programme) at the Academy of International Studies, is the Convener of SWAN. It brings together, in partnership, women from across nine countries of South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Thirty three women leaders and activists from across South Asia, including three Members of Parliament (from Afghanistan and Pakistan) working in similar areas could network with their counterparts in other countries where they can share experiences, learn from each other, identify best practices, and work towards issue-based collaboration across South Asia through agreed plans of action.

*Website: [www.swaninterface.net](http://www.swaninterface.net)*



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